

REMARKS

Claims 1-24, 26-31 and 35 are currently pending in the application. Claims 6, 7, 22-24, 26-31 and 35 are hereby cancelled.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 USC §102 as allegedly anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 676,509 (McNown). Claims 2-4, 8, 9 and 15-17 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over McNown in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,018,017 (Hill). Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over McNown in view of International Publication No. WO91/05128 (Dahlstedt). Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over McNown in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,679,280, to Friedrich et al (Friedrich). Claims 11, 12 and 14 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over McNown in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,286,269 (Marcum). Claim 13 stands rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over McNown in view of Marcum and further in view of Hill. Claims 18-21 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as obvious over McNown in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,266,386 (Bains).

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-5 and 8-21 are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney wishes to thank Examiner Fitzgerald for the courtesies extended him at the interview on July 17, 2003.

Claim 1 has been amended to characterize that the first and second connector parts as releasable from each other by repositioning at least one of the first and second connector parts from within the storage space by repositioning at least a part of the at least one of the first and second connector parts relative to the one or the another of the top panel, first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel to which the at least one of the first and second connector parts is fixably attached. The first and second connector parts

are characterized as being accessible only through the front opening of the securable enclosure in the assembled state. A lockable closure element is provided and is movable between open and closed positions. The lockable closure element in the closed position blocks access to the storage space through the front opening.

McNown does not teach or suggest cooperating connector parts with at least one of the connector parts having a part that is repositionable relative to its associated panel. With the claimed construction, it is possible to align the panels to be joined in their end relationship and to reconfigure at least one of the connector parts to selectively connect and release the same to/from each other.

McNown has fixed connecting parts which require that the associated panels be moved in their entirety to connect and release the cooperating connector parts. McNown neither teaches nor suggests the structure recited in claim 1.

The other references cited by the Examiner, taken either alone or in conjunction with McNown, do not teach or suggest the structure in claim 1. For example, Hill discloses a fixed configuration casing 11, apparently with a cylindrical configuration, to which a cover is releasably attached. The cover has an opening which allows access at all times from an exterior location to the connector elements, which releasably maintain the cover in a closed state. Hill does not teach or suggest connectable panels to produce a storage space with a front opening that can be selectively blocked and exposed by a lockable closure element, as recited in claim 1. Hill in essence is concerned only with providing a cover on a container, not with structurally joining panels using at least one pair of cooperating connector parts.

The remaining claims depend cognately from claim 1 and recite further structural detail to further distinguish over the cited art. A number of exemplary structures in the dependent claims will be discussed hereinbelow.

Claim 16 recites connector assemblies acting between each of a) the top panel and at least one of the first side panel, second side panel, and rear panel; b) the first side panel and at least one of the top panel and the rear panel; c) the second side panel and at least one of the top panel and the rear panel; and d) the rear panel and at least one of the top panel, the first side panel, and the second side panel. The connector assemblies are utilized to structurally maintain panels on the securable closure in an assembled state so as to bound/define a storage space. McNown could not use the connector assemblies disclosed therein to produce a securable enclosure, as recited in claim 16. McNown is limited with respect to an overall configuration by the range of movement permitted by the panels as they are progressively joined by repositioning the same during each assembly step. One would not logically combine Hill with McNown, given that Hill is not concerned with structurally defining an enclosure, but rather only with the releasable connection of a cover on a transformer container.

Claims 18 and 21 recite a panel having a locating post which is received in a slot on another panel. While Bains discloses such a structure, Bains does not teach or suggest this same structure in combination with first and second connector parts as recited in claim 1.

Claim 14 recites first and second flanges on the panels which each have an opening therethrough, with at least one of the first and second connector parts spaced from the flange on the panel on which the at least one of the first and second connector parts is

located. Through the first and second connector parts, the flanges are drawn against each other.

Marcum does not teach or suggest cooperating connector parts connecting through a flange as claimed.

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1-5 and 8-21 and allowance of the case are requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By


John S. Mortimer, Reg. No. 30,407

WOOD, PHILLIPS, KATZ,
CLARK & MORTIMER
500 W. Madison St., Suite 3800
Chicago, IL 60661
(312) 876-1800

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